DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 330 109 EA 022 851

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TITLE The School Principal and Chicago School Reform: Principals' Early Perceptions of Reform Initiatives. Monitoring and Researching the Effects of School Reform in Chicago.
INSTITUTION Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, IL.
PUB DATE Mar 91
NOTE 21p.
AVAILABLE FROM Publications, Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, 220 South State Street, Suite 1212, Chicago, IL 60604 (free).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; *Administrator Role; Change Strategies; Educational Change; Educational Improvement; Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Principals; *School Restructuring
IDENTIFIERS Chicago Public Schools IL; Illinois (Chicago)

ABSTRACT

In 1988 the Illinois General Assembly passed an act that shifted decision making authority on budgetary, curricular, and personnel issues from central offices to local school councils (LSCs). Eleven principals were interviewed at the end of the first year of reform implementation to learn about their early perceptions of reform initiatives and how they perceive their role under school reform. Principals' positive perceptions of school reform included having more people involved in decision making; gaining increased flexibility and discretion in decision making; moving authority closer to areas of need; having more money available; and sharing a common direction. Negative perceptions came from (among other factors) paperwork, fears that LSCs may misuse their powers; and questions about underlying reform motives. Positive role changes were perceived to have resulted from getting more help; having more teachers involved; and planning and communication. The dominant theme in negative role changes was a lack of time to accomplish tasks because of massive amounts of time associated with reform activities. Some principals' roles had not changed. (8 references) (EJS)

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MONITORING AND RESEARCHING
THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL
REFORM IN CHICAGO

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM:

PRINCIPALS' EARLY PERCEPTIONS OF REFORM INITIATIVES

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March 1991

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Major Funding for the Monitoring and Research Project is provided by

The Chicago Community Trust
The Field Foundation of Illinois
The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
The Spencer Foundation
The Woods Charitable Fund

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The Monitoring and Research staff of the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance would like to thank the local school councils, the faculties, and the principals of the schools that graciously agreed to participate in our monitoring and research study of the implementation of the Chicago School Reform Act. Our projects would not be possible without the assistance of our participant schools. We are extremely grateful to the principals who openly answered our questions and shared their perceptions about the early stages of school reform in Chicago. We thank them for allowing us to interview them.

This report is the result of a collaborative effort of the Monitoring and Research staff of the Chicago Panel. As coordinator of the Monitoring project, Cheryl Johnson developed the interview questions in collaboration with staff members, John Easton and Jesse Qualls. Cheryl Johnson and Jesse Qualls conducted the interviews with the principals. Summer interns Robin Michaels and Jill Garcia spent hours transcribing the interviews. Darryl Ford used these transcripts to identify descriptive themes among the interviews. Fred Hess, Sandra Storey and Susan Ryan reviewed drafts of this report and offered valuable comments. This report could not have been completed without the contributions of the entire Monitoring and Research staff.

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM:

PRINCIPALS' EARLY PERCEPTIONS OF REFORM INITIATIVES

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1988, the Illinois General Assembly passed the Chicago School Reform Act (Public Act 85-1418), which shifted primary responsibility for decision making from central office to local school councils (LSCs) established in each school. Local school councils, comprised of the school principal, two teachers, two community representatives, six parents, and one student member at the high schools, are authorized to make budgetary, curricular, and personnel decisions previously reserved for the central office. The General Assembly adopted the reasoning of local citizen groups that by moving decision making closer to the actual level of activity, local school councils will be better able to assess their needs and solve their problems more effectively.

The Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance has undertaken a five year project to monitor and conduct research on the implementation of the Chicago School Reform Act. Our efforts during the first year of the monitoring project have focused on developing a baseline body of data on the composition and operation of the local school councils, the development of school based management (SBM), increased local governance, the expansion of leadership roles, and the content of the initial School Improvement Plans required by the Chicago School Reform Act. This baseline body of data will be used during the subsequent years of the monitoring project to determine how reform efforts progress. This paper adds to our early understanding of Chicago's school reform initiatives by reporting on 1) principals' early perceptions of reform initiatives, and, 2) how principals perceive their role under Chicago school reform. Subsequent research will allow us to track changes in the perceptions reported here.

A. Research Overview and Questions

Our Monitoring Project calls for the intensive study of a sample of Chicago public schools. These schools were identified using a random sample of Chicago public schools stratified by race and region of the city. After we discussed our Monitoring Plan with school principals and LSC chairpersons, local school councils decided whether or not to participate in this observational study. (For a complete account of our efforts to get schools to participate in our work and a description of our request to schools, see the Panel's *Securing Participation of Schools for an In-Depth Observational Study.*) After having met with eighteen schools, twelve schools formally agreed to participate in our observation study by March, 1990. This report utilizes the data collected in principal interviews from eleven of these twelve schools. (The principal in our twelfth school was an interim principal who was not selected to become the school's permanent principal by its LSC. Due to the nature of the interview questions, neither the interim principal nor the school's new principal were interviewed. The latter, however, will by interviewed during the second year of monitoring.)

Conducted during the spring and summer of 1990 at the end of the first year of reform implementation, interviews with principals averaged about one hour in length. Principals were questioned about their school's goals for the next academic year, how each school developed its School Improvement Plan (SIP), and the relationship between the local school council and other school groups. After the interviews were transcribed, they were content analyzed in order to identify descriptive themes concerning Chicago school reform. Once complete, a draft of the report was mailed to the principals as a check to make certain that their responses were reported responsibly and to provide them the opportunity for feedback.[1] Most pertinent to this paper are the principals' early perceptions of reform initiatives and how they perceive their role as principal under Chicago School reform. Accordingly, after presenting relevant related research on principals and school based management, this report will discuss principals' general perceptions of reform and their perceived role under reform.

B. Related Research

The theoretical bases for Chicago school reform stem from research on the components of effective schools and participatory decision-making in education (Hess, 1990). Studying "outlier" schools (schools in which achievement levels exceeded that which was to be expected), Edmonds (1979) identified five factors of effective schools: high expectations for achievement, a school environment conducive to learning, emphasis on skill-acquisition, frequent monitoring of student progress, and strong administrative leadership. Similarly, other work consistently identifies the key role of the principal as instructional leader in schools considered effective.

Given the importance of a school's leadership as identified by educational research, the Chicago School Reform Act attempted to strengthen the position of the principalship by clearly specifying the prerogatives of the principal under reform. For example, the Reform Act says the school engineer "shall be accountable to the principal for carrying out his or her reasonable orders in the operation of the facility" and that the Food Service Manager "shall be accountable to the principal for the sanitary, economical and nutritious operation of the food service" (pp. 57-58). More importantly, perhaps, the school reform law stipulates that, "Principals shall be employed to supervise the educational operation of each attendance center" (p. 58). The law allows principals to fill school personnel vacancies. In addition to granting principals authority over school personnel matters, the reform act emphasizes the role of the principal as instructional leader. Public Act 85-1418 clearly charges principals to assume the "instructional leadership" of their schools, specifying that

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[1]Several principals contacted us to give their feedback on the report. For example, one principal made a renewed call for teachers, parents, and students to work together to solve the problems of the school system. This principal stated, "There's plenty to do. Be professional. Professionals are highly skilled, competent, knowledgeable, practiced, expert, experienced, and well-informed people. 'Professionals' from three walks of life produce quality teaching, quality parenting, and quality learning. Success in our school[s] depends on the quality of the partners." When appropriate, other suggestions have been incorporated into the text. We thank the principals for their valuable comments.

the principal's "primary responsibility is in the improvement of instruction" (p. 60). The law states:

> A majority of the time spent by a principal shall be spent on curriculum and staff development through formal and informal activities, establishing clear lines of communication regarding school goals, accomplishments, practices and policies with parents and teachers. (p. 60)

With the assistance of the local school council, principals must also develop a School Improvement Plan and are responsible for the SIP's implementation. In addition, principals are to develop the methods and contents of the school's curriculum with the assistance of the Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC) (p. 60-61).

A second source of research concerning Chicago school reform is the body of literature concerning school based management. Although the amount of research on school based management is increasing, surprisingly little research exists which assesses how the implementation of this form of governance affects the role of the school principal. Some work, however, does indicate the key role of the principal under SBM. For example, in their broad study of school based management, Clune and White (1988) surmised that the leadership qualities of the school principal often accounted for the difference between successful and unsuccessful school based management programs. Similarly, the findings of a study by Lindquest and Mauriel (1989) indicate the crucial role of the principal. These researchers found that whether or not the council in one high school with SBM made decisions was strongly influenced "on an issue-by-issue basis by the principal." In a second district which had formally adopted school based management in all of its schools, Lindquest and Mauriel found that the arenas of decision making were broad; however, they learned that "The amount of decision making varies by school and is influenced by the building principal and teaching staff" (p. 410). Similarly, in a study of school based management in Salt Lake City, Utah, Malen and Ogawa (1988) found that principals and professionals dominated school council activities (p. 256). Brown (1990) in a study of SBM in Canada learned that although a clear expectation exists for principals to include staffs in decision making, principals kept decisions from being made when they were in disagreement with them (p. 172).[2]

Other research also identifies factors which may be important to principals as they undertake their jobs under school based management. Several studies indicate that principals may in fact have more flexibility, increased efficiency, augmented authority, and increased accountability under school based management (See Brown, 1990; Clune & White, 1988; and David, 1989). Another work, however, emphasizes some concerns that may affect the work of principals. Chapman (1990) suggests that principals may be frustrated by having to consult those with less experience when making decisions and that they may resent the

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[2]It should be noted that the site councils in the Lindquest and Mauriel study, unlike the Chicago LSCs, were not mandated to be dominated by parents and community members. The School Community Councils in Malen and Ogawa's study, composed of parent members and school personnel, were given broad authority to make policy decisions and to act as "deciders, not advisers." In each study, however, principals and professionals tended to dominate council activities.

situation that holds them responsible for the implementation of decisions that a group has made (p. 228). Chapman also says that some principals have difficulties "balancing collaboration with supervisory duties" (p. 228) when working under school based management. Finally, several researchers have noted the demands placed on principals' time once school based management is implemented (See Brown; and Clune & White, for example).

Both the effective schools literature and the research on school based management identify the key role of the principal. This finding, along with the duties of Chicago school principals as outlined by the Chicago School Reform Act, may in fact provide "clues" to help understand Chicago school principals' early perceptions of school reform and the roles they have assumed since the implementation of SBM.

II. PRINCIPALS' EARLY PERCEPTIONS OF CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM

Throughout the interviews, principals commented on what they perceived to be the positive and negative aspects of school reform. That is, these responses did not stem from any one question, but were expressed throughout the entire interview. Principals also expressed some interesting thoughts concerning their authority and the involvement of others in school matters.

A. Principals' Positive Perceptions of Chicago School Reform

The principals in four schools stated that one of the positive effects that school reform has had is that more people are now involved in the schooling process. One principal asserted that more teachers and community members are drawn into school matters now than before school reform was implemented and that people are more aware of the school's needs and problems as a result of their involvement; another maintained that parents and community groups are now more involved in the school; and another principal held that more outside people and groups are coming in to help the school improve. The latter principal commented that outside groups like universities want to help, and that when she is contacted, people are giving. "They are more giving and not asking too much of your time, and we are seeing more positive things from the community getting involved and just being able to help the school." The fourth principal who mentioned increased involvement as a positive aspect of reform spoke of this as not having happened yet, but as potential. This principal felt that he will eventually have "ten additional pairs of hands" working in his school.

Three principals spoke positively about school reform stating that it has increased their flexibility and discretion in dealing with issues. For example, one principal noted that the school was able to decide how to spend its State Chapter I funds,[3] and because of this,

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[3]State Chapter I Funds are discretionary monies provided to public schools from the State of Illinois. The amount of funding that any given school receives is based on the school's number of low-income student. Schools now possess considerable flexibility in how they choose to spend State Chapter I funding.

was able to fund four additional summer school teaching positions. Similarly, another principal commented that he had choices in filling a teacher vacancy. He stated:

> You might say students have been better served because for the first time this year, when I had a vacancy, I didn't have to take the teacher [that] the Personnel Department sent me. I had choices. I know of one case, who the supernumerary would have been, who I would have gotten, and I know that I made a better choice because this teacher, the last seven [school] years he was in, every principal closed the whole...program just to get rid of him. That's how bad the man was, and nobody wanted to go through due process because it was easier to close the program for a year and later reopen it. Hopefully, you don't get him back, but that's what principals were doing. They would close the position just to get rid of the person. Now that's terrible, do you know what I'm saying? The last seven, and he sat right where you are and he bragged to me about the seven schools that he closed. He was proud of that! The man from the personnel [office] said, "Well, you've got to interview him, so we can at least say we've gone through the formalities," so I had an interview with him, but this jerk sat there and told me he had closed the last seven programs he was in. Had the ball game not changed this year, I would have had to take him. And I said "What schools were you at?" and he said [that] he had worked for some pretty good principals, and none of them could get along with him, so I would think that given a FTB [full-time basis substitute teacher] that I had interviewed, that was recommended, I know I had a much better teacher than I would have had I been under the old way of doing things.

Clearly, this example illustrates an increased flexibility in acquiring teachers, a flexibility that this principal views as beneficial.[4]

One principal stated that school reform has been positive because it has provided common direction for the principal and everyone else and because the principal is now held accountable for his actions. Furthermore, this same principal mentioned that school reform has been a source of empowerment, stating:

> One of the things about the school reform act is that it stresses a sharing of power and hopefully we will be able to illustrate that through sharing, we all have more power. Rather than diminishing the power that we all have, we increase it. We increase our ability to accomplish by sharing power. That's the great hope of reform and that's what I see as the great value in it although we haven't moved rapidly in that direction because I think that some of the planning that needed to be done for the reform wasn't in place.

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[4]In reviewing this report, one principal from our sample commented that the law stipulates that the LSC can make recommendations to principals about filling staff positions. This principal, however, thinks the LSCs assume a greater role than provided in the law and may intrude on principals' prerogatives.

Although this principal feels that planning prior to reform's implementation was problematic, he clearly views reform as enabling empowerment at the local level.

One respondent noted that a positive element of school reform is that decision making has been moved closer to the area of need. According to this principal, more decisions being made at the local level allows for a more accurate diagnosis of what needs exist, and enables people to react more quickly to the needs.

Finally, two principals stated that a positive aspect of school reform is that more money has been available. For instance, in one school, the principal said that it was decided that bilingual money should be spent on an after school bilingual program. This decision has meant that students are no longer pulled out of classes in order to receive bilingual instruction. Similarly, another principal commented that his school's State Chapter I money has increased, and that there has been additional money for band instruments, business and shop equipment, and furniture. In this school, additional funding was also used to build a software library, and it was planned that a security system would be added to the library.

B. Principal's Negative Perceptions of Chicago School Reform

The eleven principals interviewed also perceived certain aspects of school reform negatively. Six principals made general comments that reform is time intensive and taxing. Among other things, they stated that reform has reduced "professional thinking time" and that timelines are unrealistic and the LSC needs more time to complete its tasks.

Three principals complained that the paperwork associated with reform is negative, and one principal noted that reform has been meeting oriented. This last principal concluded that the "paper intensive" nature of reform plus the "time consuming" nature of reform plus the "meeting oriented" nature of reform all contribute to diminishing the energy and creativity of the school's staff and parents.

Several principals stated fears that they have about school reform. For example, one principal noted that principals fear that some LSCs may misuse their powers and remove principals from their jobs for no apparent reason or for non-professional ones. Similarly, another principal feared that "the council will come to [the] point where they begin to make judgements about certain classes, certain groups of children, where that begins to color their judgement." Furthermore, this same principal was concerned that LSC members may not act like board of education members who only set policy. This principal expressed concern that LSC members may try to circumvent the principal in order to become directly involved in a situation like teacher evaluation.

One principal's apprehension was that parents may not be ready for the kind of decision making that school reform requires of them. Interestingly, this principal questioned the underlying motives of school reform, stating:

> Well, I think as I see it, reform is a legislated mandate that says students in the Chicago school system will be at or above national norms in their skill achievement, and I think they have then thrown the responsibilities for

> implementation right in the laps of parents. And I don't think that the parents are necessarily ready to make the kinds of decisions that will lead to this kind of achievement. And I feel that if mandates were all that we needed to make the situation so, we wouldn't have any of the social problems that exist. So in one sense, I think it was a cop out by the legislators to get the public off their backs in terms of school improvement.

As the above comment indicates, this principal thought that school reform was a convenient means to shift the burden of school improvement to those people who, in his opinion, may be least well prepared to help schools improve.

A similarly wary thought was conveyed by one principal who commented that school reform is a charade unless there is adequate funding for school reform and unless the school system receives "permanent funding at the appropriate level." He stated,

> What will impact definitely, directly on the kids, is an increase in state funding so we can afford to run the programs we want....I'm just using my analogy of school reform. You and I are driving in a car , arguing about which way we ought to be going. I run out of gas and say, "Damn it, you drive!" You know, now you get to choose the route, which is great. But until somebody puts gas in the tank, it doesn't make much difference. You know, I'll help you push it anywhere you want to go. But there's no gas; you're not going anywhere. The system is out of gas. It's not just [that] the driver's decisions have been bad. The system is out of gas.

While welcoming the opportunity to make decisions which may positively affect students, this principal clearly feels that neither reform nor the school system has received adequate financial support.

Other responses concerning school reform included one principal feeling that she possessed more responsibility for education but less help, the same salary, and her job on the line. She commented, "...[we] have all this power, but on the other hand, we have a sword hanging over our heads." Still another principal did not like the fact that teachers help to decide whether or not her contract is renewed. She commented that she feels that the teachers' opportunity to participate in school reform is through the PPAC, and stated that teachers should not be on the LSC given that School Board employees could not run for council positions. This same principal also perceived the fact that there was no standardized training for LSC members as negative, and thought parents should have had training on parliamentary procedures. Finally, one principal felt that LSCs were overburdened during their first year of existence. This principal cited that the councils had to get themselves organized, get training, decide on the principal's contract,[5] do lump sum

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[5]Half of the Chicago principals' performance contracts came up for renewal during the 1989-90 school year, while the remainder of the principals' performance contracts are up for renewal during the 1990-91 school year. Consequently, local school councils in about half of Chicago's public schools needed to decide whether or not to offer their principals a four year contract shortly after the implementation of school reform.

budgeting, and work on the School Improvement Plan. He concluded, "I think that what they gave the councils to do this year was a little unrealistic. It was too much for the first year."

C. Principal Authority and Parental Involvement

Throughout the course of the interviews, some principals made interesting comments concerning authority within schools. Five principals said that the ultimate responsibility for running the school rests with the principal. Principals expressed this sentiment succinctly in comments like "the final burden is on the principal," and "the ultimate responsibility is mine" and "...and let's face it, responsibility for this stuff really comes back basically to the principal." Another principal stated that in the long run, she is responsible for making certain things get done in the school, and questioned who is available to help principals so that they do not waste so much time. Still another principal stated: "The local school council is an oversight [authority] for the school--who operates through the principal. That's the kind of relationship we have--oversight committees or as liaisons, and they work through not with."

Another interesting finding stems from one principal's view concerning parent involvement. In direct contrast to one of the primary goals of Chicago school reform--to increase parental participation in the schooling process, this principal commented that the existence of the local school council has actually limited the amount of parental participation. This principal said that it is difficult for the six elected parents on the LSC to make certain that the parents who were not elected feel included. She commented that "there was a little jealousy" on the part of those not elected, and that she has to constantly remind the LSC to involve other people. This principal also noted that in order to keep those parents who were not elected to the council involved, the school has "formed committees that are just as powerful as the local school council to allow for all these people who want to be involved."

III. ROLE CHANGES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THEM

In addition to learning about principals' general impressions concerning Chicago school reform, we ascertained information concerning how principals perceived their role under school based management. Principals' responses to the question "Can you give some examples of how school reform has changed your role in a positive and negative way?" add to our early understanding of principals under the Chicago School Reform Act and are now explored.

A. Positive Role Changes Among Principals

Six of the eleven principals in our study identified changes in their roles that they perceive as positive. For example, two principals cited the increased discretion/flexibility that they have as a result of reform as positive. One principal stated, "Well, in a positive way, we get things done faster because we don't have to go through 200 different people, so we get things done faster." This principal also noted she is now able to interview

prospective teachers for the school, and as a result, the school has acquired better teachers. This same principal and one other also cited the discretion associated with the allocation of funds as positive. According to the latter, "We were able to take State Chapter I money and allocate more money for books and supplies. We were able to allocate where we felt our needs were. And I've also written in four positions for summer school. We always have far more kids wanting to go to summer school than the Board ever let us have."

Several principals mentioned that their role has changed as a result of school reform because they now get more help. One principal said that a lot of wisdom comes from working with the LSC and that any decisions made in collaboration with the LSC through consensus have to be better than those made solely by the principal. This principal stated, "It's inconceivable to me that a lot of people are going to come together and agree on something that isn't for the benefit of the children." Similarly, another principal noted that reform has given him "some lefties," [that is, additional help] and as a result, he does not face reform all alone.

Interestingly, the third principal who mentioned additional help spoke about this as potential, something that will occur in the future. In response to the question how has reform positively and negatively changed your role, he stated:

> Positively, it has given me ten colleagues. When time may give me the opportunity to do things with the support [of these LSC members] which in turn may permit me greater access to the communication system of parents and [the] community--[they] will be ten additional hands, helping hands, and that we will be a group rather than a person. I think that has a tremendous potential. Notice I said potential? It ain't happened yet.

This person perceives reform as potentially offering support.

Interestingly, one principal noted that her role is different because there are now more teachers becoming involved in the decision making process, and that she must let go of some activities so that teachers can be involved. This person stated:

> On the positive, we have more and more teachers [involved]. Before, maybe I had four teachers, maybe now I have twelve teachers that are involved in decision making. So that the little core group that I depend on is getting bigger which is nice. And they're taking it on themselves--more responsibility--and they are not about to come in at 8:30 and leave at 2:30. You know that they are more willing to come in early and leave late and to take on more tasks. That's helping me....It's letting other people do things even if they don't do it as well, have to do them over, or whatever. Or if they are late, it doesn't matter. I am just going to have to take that attitude and just let go and let other people do them....in the long run, these people will learn and that's going to help me. So I'm looking to the long range rather than doing it right now.

This principal thinks that the benefit of teachers becoming more involved now will be additional help for her later.

One other principal said that her role has changed positively because reform has fostered planning and communication. She said that reform has "made us think where we are going and what we are doing." She explained that she has always been a planner, but now she has to think about how she is communicating with people (the LSC) who do not know what she was experiencing before reform. This principal, however, welcomed the interaction of her LSC, stating "...one of the positive things I like is that other people are involved in this; I really like it."

In sum, some principals identified increased discretion, the potential for additional help in the school, and planning and communicating with others as positive role changes which have resulted from reform.

B. Negative Role Changes Among Principals

The principals in our sample schools had many more negative comments concerning how their role has changed. The dominant theme throughout these comments focuses on the lack of time to accomplish tasks and the massive amounts of time associated with reform activities. Five principals noted that because the demands on principals are great, certain opportunity costs have resulted. Two principals said that they now have less time for their supervisory tasks. One stated that his "personal contact with staff and students has been decreased in that particular way," while another noted that he is now locked in the office working on different proposals and that this has resulted in less time for supervision.

Two other principals remarked that the time demands associated with reform take away from other activities. One principal asserted that the LSC election and organization, dealing with the principal's contract, and preparing materials for the LSC all took away from other activities. Still another commented on the business of the early stages of school reform:

> I mean, I spent September and October [1989] working on the council matters, plus the day-to-day operations, and I never got to the instructional program, except for the meeting with my teachers. I didn't get out to observe; you know, that was a real hard time, and to think that I am going to have to go through that same thing again.

Another principal summed up these comments, stating, "I find myself meeting myself coming and going because there are just more things than I can get done in the course of the day."

Interestingly, four principals report that they have assumed the role of information provider to the LSC but that they begrudged the time associated with this new task. One principal succinctly stated that "...it has taken massive chunks of time to educate persons because they just don't know." This same principal went on to say that it is not the people's

fault that it has taken time to educate them; nevertheless, this is a time consuming task. Two other principals echoed this sentiment, stating:

> The only thing I worry about is time: time, time, time. It's amazing, these people get on one small topic and you can spend an hour on it. Then, when you think about the many things that we have to cover, it adds up. But the one thing I am fully committed to is spending all the time that I am asked to spend;

and:

> The down side of school reform is that I just don't have enough time in my day. It's taken far more time. First of all, I'm spending a lot of time explaining to people who have no background knowledge. It's just time consuming. I'm not decrying it; it's just time consuming.

Another principal reiterated these sentiments by saying that it "...is another full-time job educating the council." This person, however, characterized this negative as a "temporary negative," one that would pass after people learn about school operations.

Yet another principal spoke about how her role has changed in a way she perceives as negative because of the nature of some of the tasks which have developed as a result of school reform. This person's role changes can be characterized in several different ways. For example, one role is that of public relations person. She says,

> Well, it seems like most of my time has been just smiling at the parents and "PR-ing." If I were to go and do my job, I would not have too much time for them [parents]; so when my contract comes up, I'm not going to be renewed. So I could be a real good principal, but not being perceived as receptive to the parents and not get my contract. I could be wishy-washy and be nice to the parents and get my contract.

This principal's role can also be characterized as facilitator. She mentioned that there are "two little factions" on the LSC and that this has caused conflict among that body, and that it is her "role as principal to get them together."

Finally, this principal expressed her frustration by characterizing her post-reform role as a glorified clerk. She stated,

> But you know, this is becoming very frustrating because it seems like everything is falling on my shoulders--dealing with the parents, dealing with the local school council, dealing with the teachers, getting all of the reports done--and it's very frustrating. But in the long run, if I don't do these things, it's going to fall back on me...it all boils down to who is out there to help me, who's out there in the district or central office to help principals so we don't

waste so much time? You know, I feel like a glorified clerk. You see what I'm saying, why I'm so frustrated--because that's all that I am, a glorified clerk.

This statement is interesting also because it indicates that this principal feels that she has not received much help from either district or central offices, a long standing complaint with Chicago school principals.

One final negative comment concerning a principal's role change stems from the fact that the principal along with his LSC is able to interview for staff positions. Although being able to interview to fill staff positions is often considered a positive development under school reform, this principal feels negatively about interviewing prospective employees with LSC members. It was commented: "Here we are, we're interviewing four persons for the position of Child Welfare Attendant. *We are interviewing*. Now, I have to adjust to that. That is my problem with it. I just honestly feel that I'm in the better position to know which of those four should be in that position" (emphasis added). Interestingly, although this principal feels better equipped to make staffing decisions, he is adapting to his LSC being involved in the process.

C. The Principals' Role as Different

At times, principals' comments about their role under school reform were neither negative nor positive; they just indicated it was different. They did not attribute positive or negative connotations to their tasks that have developed since school reform. For example, in the characterization of the principal as information provider, three principals did not evaluate this task as positive or negative, but just accepted it. For example, one principal who characterized herself as a "mother hen" said that her role in relationship to her parents on the council is to make certain that "they understand what they're supposed to do, and understand what my goals are." Similarly, another principal commented that he must give parents on the LSC more time and information so that they can make decisions. Concerning the LSC, another principal stated, "I'm always providing additional information. I'm always providing additional education."

The responses of several principals indicate that their role under school reform is different by virtue of the fact that they must now deal with new groups that have been created because of reform. One principal mentioned that he now has the task of checking the work of his council members, stating, "You can't expect council members to learn it all in a day. My basic job, or one of my basic jobs, has been to go over this [budget] and make sure they didn't leave anything out, that they didn't leave some teacher out, or teacher aide, and I found two or three errors."

Three other principals' tasks were different because of their interactions with the Professional Personnel Advisory Committee and the LSC. One principal said that he meets with the PPAC co-chairs in order to give them direction, while another said he takes problems to his PPAC or has it raise issues and present its solutions to problems. The latter principal also indicated that he hoped that his PPAC would be able to address issues

concerning a uniform dress code. One other principal indicated that his role is different because requisitions must now be submitted to the LSC for its approval.

Still another principal noted that the nature of the principalship had been altered under school reform. This person stated, "The principalship has been changed. Whether that's good or bad is yet to be determined. But one thing that's clearly been determined is that it's not a principal [position], but a principal-superintendent type [position]. The principal has two jobs." Finally, one principal simply stated that he has needed to adjust his way of operating.

D. Principal's Role as the Same

Four principals indicated that their role has not changed since school reform was enacted. One asserted that "There is nothing new in the governing process; it is only new because of the new elements." This same person indicated that the school must be run in an orderly and professional manner regardless of the people involved in the governing process. Two of these four principals indicated that their roles have not changed because what school reform demands is what they have always wanted. One stated, "...I'm not sure that school reform has changed my role, personally, that much because I think that school reform wants was what I wanted before." This sentiment was also expressed in the following comment: "I think whether reform came or not, I am going to be the same way that I have always been. I would be doing this, regardless."

Finally, one principal indicated that her role as principal has not changed, but the role of teachers had changed. She stated:

> I don't think that it's changed my role. You know what it's changed? The teachers' role. I had a month or two of teachers hating each other. They were concerned about the power that teachers on the council had. For example, when decisions were made, they felt that they should have been contacted by their teacher representatives and had their opinions voiced before any decisions were made by the teachers. And they got very angry, very angry. You can talk to the two teachers involved. Many faculty members got very angry with them. Nobody explained the teachers' role. Nobody said to the teachers [on the local school council] before you make a decision, you should hear the other teachers out.

This principal later commented that she wants "to provide an atmosphere where we all can respect each other and try to understand each other and work together. And that's what I'm trying to do, nurture the atmosphere."

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

While the comments and thoughts expressed by the principals in this sample are informative, caution must be exercised when trying to interpret meaning, for several reasons. For example, this analysis has relied solely on one source of data, interviews held with

principals in eleven sample schools. Furthermore, it must be considered that some principals expressed many positive and negative comments while others had less to say concerning school reform. Also, it is worth remembering that these interviews were conducted fairly early in the existence of reform when schools, principals, and local school councils were experiencing great transition. Consequently, it is not proper to conclude either that the principals in this sample are in support of or against school reform. It must also be noted that given the limited sample size of principals interviewed, the comments of these principals cannot be used to make gross generalizations regarding trends in post-reform principal behavior or positive or negative generalizations about reform. These limitations can, of course, be addressed in future research. For example, sources of data can be expanded by questioning teachers and council members about how principals' behaviors have changed since reform. Furthermore, if generalization of principal's views is an ultimate goal, a large survey study augmented by selected interviews may be required.

Although these concerns are significant, content analysis of these principal interviews has identified certain descriptive themes that may be worthy of special attention. For example, the opinion that school reform has taken excessive amounts of time to implement is infused throughout many of the principals' comments. This sentiment is consistent with the findings of Brown (1990) and those of Clune and White (1988) who identified time demands as a major concern of principals functioning under school based management. Furthermore, principals conveyed that they have been unable to complete tasks like supervision because of the time that reform takes. This sentiment is not unlike Chapman's (1990) concern that principals may face difficulties in balancing collaboration and supervisory duties. This finding is also of particular importance given that the Chicago School Reform Act charges principals with the primary responsibility for improving instruction. If this requires increased supervision, then it should be of special concern that some principals say that they have had less time for their supervisory tasks since the implementation of reform. Future research needs to pay attention to time demands on principals to see if they are reduced, remain great, or are redirected toward instructional and curricular tasks as the law intends. Also, it will be interesting to determine whether the demands on principals' time will again become excessive when new councils are elected in October, 1991.

Another theme which is worthy of attention is that of the principal as information provider. In subsequent years of school reform, it will be important to determine whether the principal remains a major source of information or if council members will look elsewhere for guidance. Furthermore, future work may investigate whether a larger amount of principals do in fact view their role as that of information provider, clerk, facilitator and public relations person.

Another finding which is worthy of further attention is the belief expressed by five principals that the ultimate responsibility for running the school rests with the principal. These statements are of interest because they may imply two things. First, it may be a positive thing that ultimate responsibility lies with the principal if this means that schools, not the central office, really are responsible for decision making as the Chicago School Reform Act intended. By contrast, if this sentiment means that these principals really feel that ultimate responsibility lies with them and not with their local school councils, it can be

questioned whether the decision making role of their councils is real or "pro forma." If the latter is what principals meant, then future research should address how wholeheartedly principals accept their councils as decision makers.

The comments of some principals identify their concern as to whether or not local school council members are prepared to make the type of decisions required of them in order to improve their children's education. In one school, the principal *and* LSC members conducted interviews for staff positions, even though this principal felt more qualified to make personnel decisions. These concerns are consistent with Chapman's (1990) suggestion that some principals may feel resentment at having to consult with and implement the ideas of people who may have less experience than they. It will be interesting and valuable to determine how principals and councils select personnel. Do principals request input from LSCs? Do LSCs demand to participate? Do LSCs perceive their input as advisory or as binding? Future investigation will help to make these issues clearer and to determine whether other fears expressed by principals (like council members not acting as board of education members nor always acting in a professional manner) will occur.

Finally, as the Chicago public schools enter subsequent years of reform, it will be necessary to explore whether Chicago principals are primarily performing those tasks which the Chicago School Reform Act outlines as the duties of the principal under reform or whether principals continue in the traditional roles to which they have become accustomed. Consequently, future research should directly compare the ideal role of the school principal as outlined by Public Act 85-1418 and the actual roles which principals assume, and address the adequacy of both.

Additional research on the changing and emerging role of the public school principals under Chicago school reform is needed to address both the issues identified in this study and the future issues which are certain to arise. This study, which has identified principals' early general impressions of school reform and principals' perceptions of their role since reform, has offered insights into what may frame many future research agendas.

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